



Justiça Ambiental/FOE Mozambique's Position on the Prosavana Program

The Prosavana program is inspired by Prodecer, a Japanese-Brazilian agricultural development program developed in the Brazilian Cerrado since the 70's. Referred to by the Brazilian, Japanese, and Mozambican governments as a success, the Prodecer program promoted the distribution and possession of land to foreigners and turned Brazil into an avid promoter of land usurpation practices abroad.

By way of Prosavana, Brazil plans to export an agro-industrial development model to Mozambique that failed in Brazil, where more than 65 million Brazilians are in a situation of food insecurity and millions of people struggle for access to land for food production a means of ensuring livelihood. Experience shows that the benefits of the Brazilian model have been insignificant when compared to the devastating impacts on the lives of peasants, forests, and the biodiversity of the country.

The Prosavana program was skilfully and conveniently wrapped in an elegant "green" language and has been presented to Mozambicans and the international community as a program of "sustainable agricultural development", completely leaving out its potential social and environmental impacts. However, in a program of this size which requires the resettlement of communities, it is disturbing to realize that these communities know little or nothing about it. It is yet another program designed and decided upon at the highest level without any involvement of farmers, local communities, or the public.

Through Prosavana, Japan intends to ensure, outside its territory, a new source of agricultural goods at low costs, with the purpose of exporting them to the Asian market, particularly Japan and China.

Brazil sees in Prosavana an opportunity for expansion, technical cooperation, and a good investment for their producers and supply companies.

What are the benefits for Mozambique?

A major problem for the promoters of this program is that almost all of the Nacala corridor lands are occupied by peasants. This is the most populated region of the country, where fertile soil and abundant rain allows millions of peasants to work and produce food in abundance. The Nacala corridor is considered the breadbasket of the region, providing food to the inhabitants of the northern provinces and allowing the survival of millions of families. The rationale and purpose of Prosavana promotes the usurpation of land and the expulsion of thousands of local farmers who depend on it.

The Prosavana program has been questioned and challenged by civil society organizations, among them the National Union of Peasants (UNAC).

UNAC is a peasant movement of the family sector founded in 1987 and recognized by the Government as a partner and by Mozambican peasants as its representative at a national level. Over the past 25 years UNAC has been playing a crucial role in empowering farmers' organizations in the fight for their rights to land and natural resources and in the discussion of the public policies for the agricultural sector. It has more than 86,000 individual members grouped into 2200 associations and cooperatives, 83 district unions, 7 unions and 4 provincial unions. Justiça Ambiental corroborates UNAC's position on the Prosavana Program.

Justiça Ambiental / FOE Mozambique strongly condemn the whole process of preparing and implementing ProSavana because:

1. It is based on the import of top-to-down policies and so far the circulating information is incomplete and unclear;
2. The program is connoted as "sustainable agricultural development" and targets to improve the lives of peasant families and cooperatives of farmers, however, it suggests the resettlement of communities and the expropriation of land;
3. Promotes the influx of Brazilian farmers turning Mozambican farmers into cheap labour;
4. Requires millions of hectares of land that is not actually available due to the system of leaving land fallow;
5. This ignores the benefits of the program for the peasants;
6. The program is structured to promote the expropriation of land to the peasants and local communities in general;
7. Promotes the violation of the rights of peasants given the insecurity of land tenure, regarding DUAT (Right to Land Use);

8. Promotes worsened corruption and conflict of interest given the enormous interests involved;
9. Will aggravate the already precarious living conditions of many communities completely dependent on agricultural production for their livelihoods which could lead to a massive rural exodus;
10. The program provides a high mechanization and excessive use of chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides leading to contamination of the soil and water courses;
11. There is a convenient lack of clarity over the use or otherwise of genetically modified organisms which given Embrapa's connection to Monsanto is probably expected.

We demand that the Mozambican state, as stipulated by Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique, assume its sovereignty and its leading role in defending the interests of its people.

We demand also that the Mozambican government reassess the ProSavana program taking into account the aspirations, concerns, and needs of Mozambicans, particularly farmers who are most affected by the program and who constitute the vast majority of the Mozambican people. ProSavana, in terms of what it proposes, will threaten food sovereignty, access to land, water, and the entire social structure of families of thousands of Mozambicans thus crippling the nation's future.

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